

Name of person interviewed: George Tsugawa

Date of interview: September 24, 2011

Location of interview:

Special Conditions:

General Description of contents: growing up in Hillsboro, experience being sent to and living in Minidoka internment camp during WWII

:37 – 5:15 growing up and going to school in Hillsboro area as a child, playing sports in high school, former teachers

5:17 – 8:54 moves to North Portland, Japan attacks the U.S., talks about new laws imposed on Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor, talks about process of being sent to Minidoka internment camp: kept for 2-3 months in North Portland in 15x15 ft sq meatpacking room with bad stench, loaded on a train and transported to Minidoka Idaho packed onto train like sardines

8:56 – 11:53 describing Minidoka camp physical layout: watchtowers, barracks, population size, roads

11:55 – 12:40 talks about his family, losing father and helping take care of siblings exempted him from military service.

12:45 – 16:40 work/jobs at internment camp, permit to leave camp to do farm labor at local farms

16:45 – 17:37 recreation in internment camp, dances

17:40 – 20:47 talks about U.S. finally trusting Niseis enough as loyal citizen to volunteer for U.S. army, 442nd division heroism and paving the way for better treatment of Japanese Americans after the war.

20:55 – 23:10 talks about post-war discrimination upon returning to Portland after internment, seeing signs that say "No Japs Allowed," moving to Beaverton and beginning farming.

23:25 – 24:20 talks about the people he met in the internment camp, dying off of WWII generation

24:30 – 26:00 back to experience of being rounded up and finding out he will be going to an internment camp, personal items allowed to bring and had to leave behind.

26:20 – 28:00 back to Japanese Americans in camps who volunteered for military service in WWII, wanted to prove they were loyal Americans, opposition of parents to children fighting for nation who had imprisoned them, Tsugawa admires those who volunteered.

28:00 – talks about Japanese-Americans who were not interred, only those near the coast had to move.

29:00 – 31:00 talks about feelings about living in Washington County before and after war/internment, Japanese “ghettos” (particularly in NW Portland) where gathered in groups broken up by war because people scattered.

31:00 – 33:25 desire of Japanese-American parents for children to go to college and make a better life for themselves. Many friends turned out to be doctors, dentists, lawyers though Tsugawa became a farmer. Hard work and optimism among Nisei

35:35 – 38:30 talks again about people being able to bring very little to internment camps, having to leave almost all possessions behind forever. Talks about getting outside retail in camp through Montgomery Ward’s catalogue. They were promised personal possessions would be returned when they left the camp, but never got anything back.

38:40 – 40:35 Though some people do not understand it, in spite of everything that happened to him, Tsugawa says he really does not have any hard feelings. It was war. Everybody suffers in war. Pride in second and third generation Japanese-Americans. He admits his feeling is not common, many Japanese-Americans were bitter about the way they were treated and they have a right to be.

Tags

Agricultural laborers, Basketball, Beaverton—Oregon, Construction, David Hill Elementary School, Farming, Football, High school sports, Hillsboro--Oregon, Hillsboro High School, Japanese internment camps, Minidoka--Idaho, Minidoka internment camp, Nisei, North Portland, Northwest Portland, Peter Boscow Jr. High, Seattle—Washington, Shute Park, Tule Lake—California, Tule internment camp, Twin Fall--Idaho, World War II